

COLLOQUY

Webster's Dictionary defines colloquy as mutual discourse. Readers are encouraged to submit additions, corrections, and comments about earlier articles appearing in Word Ways. Comments received at least one month prior to publication of an issue will appear in that issue.

Dmitri Borgmann writes "William Sunners' article about Herbert M. Baus's Master Crossword Puzzle Dictionary is silent about its principal faults. What is wrong with that dictionary is that it includes thousands of typographical and spelling errors - there are some on every page of the book. These errors are not limited to ones appearing in synonym lists: some of the entries themselves, in heavy block printing, are misspelled. Another fault of the work is that some of the entries are synonyms for which no one will ever be looking. A third fault is the inclusion of synonyms for which it is impossible to find verification in any reference work, leaving them unusable .. This is the kind of book where the user has to know a lot more than the author did in order to gain some benefit from it!" He appends three pages of errors "selected hurriedly and at random" which are too lengthy to reproduce in Word Ways, but the editor will send photocopies to anyone sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

In his article, Sunners criticizes the Baus synonym dictionary for incompleteness, citing as examples various Biblical kings, animals, and cities omitted by Baus but included in his booklet, Bible Curiosities. Alas, Sunners' booklet is also incomplete; Dmitri Borgmann lists three kings (Achish, Agrippa, Amaziah), nine animals (addax, bull, bullock, calf, cow, deer, elephant, ewe, fawn) and five cities (Abez, Acco, Abelmaim, Achmetha, Abelmeholah) that Sunners omitted in the alphabetic stretches he quoted. Dmitri compiled the kings and cities additions from the Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary, 3rd Revised Edition, edited by Melancthon W. Jacobus, Elbert C. Lane, and Andrew C. Zenos, with the assistance of Elmer J. Cook (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1936). The Biblical animals are from the Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible, by Louis F. Hartman (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), a translation of a Dutch work by van den Born.

Cynthia Knight of Chicago reminds Word Ways readers of the somewhat ambiguous mnemonic used by electronics technicians to remember the color code: Bad Boys Rape Our Young Girls But Violet Gives Willingly (black, brown, red, orange, yellow, blue, violet, gray, white). Perhaps the first two letters should be coded, as Edward Wolpow suggested!

William Sunners adds to Eugene Ulrich's "Double Entendre Headlines" one that appeared in the Manchester Guardian in 1943 concerning Rommel's defeat in North Africa: BRITISH PUSH BOTTLES UP NAZIS' REAR. Philip Cohen marveled at the heroism of Police Officer Heart in HEART ATTACKS TOP WESTCHESTER KILLER. Mrs. Alfred D. Johnson sends in the following from the Finger Lake Times of September 11, 1984: BOARD TO MEET ON LEAKY SEPTIC SYSTEM. Charles Karns of Vienna, Virginia has collected headlines like these for some time:

SUNDAY TO BE RENAMED (Jack Sunday, to a commission)
 MESSIAH TAKES FIFTH (Messiah College team took fifth place)
 HOLY SPIRIT NAMES TWO (new hospital board members)
 NIXON LIFTS GAS BAN; STANDS PAT ON TAPES
 BARBARA EDEN SHOOTS PILOT (a new TV series)
 POPE ISSUES WARNING ON CHRISTMAS (don't commercialize it)
 CARLISLE EYES WATER (they need a new supply)
 SERVICE BREAK ON FLUSHING LINE (Transit Authority troubles)
 DOWNTOWN CRIME REWARD FUND SET
 CB'ERS ASKED TO ASSIST IN DRUNK DRIVING PLAN
 CORRECTION BUREAU ADMITS SOME MISTAKES
 POOR HEALTH REASON FOR WALLACE DEMISE
 MISSING BOMBER CREW TO BE BURIED AT ARLINGTON
 UNDERGROUND FUGITIVE FREED AFTER 11 MONTHS

In the November 1982 *Word Ways*, Kyle Corbin presented the highest 1-move, 2-move, ..., 6-move Scrabble scores. Recently, he discovered the word DECARBOXYLIZING in Webster's Second, enabling him to improve the 3-move record from 664 to 716, and the 4-move one from 857 to 877. The details are:

D E C A R B O X Y L I Z I N G	Turn	Score
I	CARBOXY	94
Q	LIQUEFY, CARBOXYL	122
U	DECARBOXYLIZING	500
E		
F		
Y		

D E C A R B O X Y L I Z I N G	Turn	Score
A	XANTHYL	98
N	CARBOXYL	73
T	DECARBOXYLIZING	500
H	JACKSAW, XANTHYLS	206
Y		
L		
J A C K S A W		

In "The Ultimate Homonym Group" published in this issue, Dmitri Borgmann used an elaborate technique to find a word in which the letter X is pronounced K. He subsequently discovered a simple example for that pronunciation: AMAXOSA, in Webster's Third, is pronounced 'amakosa'.

John Henrick calls the editor's attention to a booklet "Squad Helps Dog Bit Victim and other flubs from the nation's press", published by Dolphin Books in 1980.

Dmitri Borgmann writes "It would have been helpful if you had provided brief explanations of the more obscure terms [in Henrick's 'Limits of the Human Life Cycle'] .. What is BUYING THE FARM? .. What does From TITTER to LITTER mean?" The former term, common in the Vietnam War, is an euphemism for being killed; the latter probably means from an infant nursing on a teat (not in any dictionary) to one so near death that he must be transported on a stretcher.

Following up on the February 1984 Colloquy, Kyle Corbin discovered a 21-letter transposition pair that doesn't consist solely of switching component parts: ENCEPHALOMENINGLITIDES and MENINGOENCEPHALITIDES. Both are plurals of words in Webster's Third.

John Henrick pored through W.W. Skeat's An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language ("Distribution of Words", Appendix VI, pages 761-66, which lists 14,286 words which have been borrowed one or more times from other languages). After excluding 492 hybrid words with different histories for their component parts, and 10 words of unknown etymology, he found 1082 that had been borrowed three times, 123 that had been borrowed four times, 19 that had been borrowed five times, and 1 that had been borrowed six times (INDIGO: French, Spanish, Latin, Greek, Persian, Sanskrit). It is possible to fit these data to a Poisson distribution; given that a word has been borrowed, it is borrowed on the average 1.45 times.

Errata: In "The Maori Rolls", there are 95 (not 75) electorates in New Zealand, and Tesla Jynxtito should have been written Tesla Jynx Tito. On the first page of Kickshaws, the Voyages of Marrakesh should have been Voices, the World Almanac in the Lipolists section was published in 1979 (not 1919), and the first answer to the Miniabbreviations Quiz should have been 1-Y. In "The Letter Rebus (Part 3)", Philip Cohen notes that the rebus 1THNS (cited on p. 157 and the bottom of p. 159) should have been interpreted "insert Thin INsoleS", HCS at the bottom of p. 158 should have been interpreted "HandS across the sea*", and PREBUS [over] IUM on p. 159 should have been interpreted "extra PatimonIUM". He points out that the rebus T at the middle of p. 158 can equally well be interpreted as "T [set] in type", analogous to the rebus 1M "1M printed". Finally, the last rebus on p. 158 was erroneously written; it should have been X1X0X "OXldes a redness orca net".